

## Ella P. Mitchell



The Rev. Dr. Ella Pearson Mitchell, the daughter of a South Carolina pastor, became the second African-American woman to graduate from Union in 1943 with a Master of Arts degree in Christian Education. She served as Minister of Education at the Church of the Master in New York City, as well as at St. James Presbyterian Church in Harlem. The year following her graduation, she married fellow Union graduate Henry H. Mitchell '44. They were married for 64 years, until her death in 2008.

Dr. Mitchell distinguished herself as an instructor and scholar in religious education at American Baptist Seminary of the West, Fresno State College, Second Baptist Church in Los Angeles, Compton College, Santa Monica City College, and Proctor School of Theology. From 1959 to 1973, she served on the Board of Educational Ministries of American Baptists, four years as its president. In 1974, Mitchell received the Doctor of Ministry degree from the School of Theology in Claremont, and was ordained at Allen Temple Baptist Church in Oakland in 1978. She was the first woman to preach at the Hampton Ministers' Conference and the first woman to serve as Dean of Sisters Chapel at Spelman College in Atlanta.

In addition to her work as an educator, Ella Mitchell edited **Women: To Preach or Not To Preach** (1991) and five volumes of **Those Preaching Women** (1985-2008). She and Henry Mitchell co-authored an autobiography of their marriage, **Together for Good** (1999), and **Fire in the Well: Sermons by Ella P. and Henry H. Mitchell** (2003). She was the recipient of Union Theological Seminary's Unitas Award, Claremont School of Theology's distinguished alumni/ae award; and was a Union Trailblazers honoree.